AOSpine Thoracolumbar Classification System

Type A. Compression Injuries

A0. Minor, nonstructural fractures
Fractures, which do not compromise the structural integrity of the spinal column such as osteoporotic compression fractures.

A1. Wedge-compression
Fracture of a single endplate without involvement of the posterior wall of the vertebral body.

A2. Split
Fracture of both endplates without involvement of the posterior wall of the vertebral body.

Type B. Distraction Injuries

B1. Transosseous tension band disruption
Chance fracture
Anomalous (i.e., non-ossous) failure of the tension band. The classical Chance fracture.

B2. Posterior tension band disruption
Type C. Translation Injuries

C. Translation or dislocation
There are no subtypes because various configurations are possible due to distraction/dislocation. Can be combined with subtypes of A or B.

Type C. Translation Injuries

B3. Hyperextension
Injury through the disk or vertebral body leading to a hyperextended position of the spinal column. Commonly seen in ankylotic disorders. Involves anterior structures, especially the ALL are ruptured but there is a posterior hinge preventing further displacement.

B4. Flexion
Injury through the disk or vertebral body leading to a flexion position of the spinal column. Commonly seen in ankylotic disorders.

Classification nomenclature

Displacement of Injury

A0: NO; B1: A1; B2: A1

Neurologic status

N0: Neurologically intact
N1: Transient neurologic deficit, which is no longer present
N2: Neurologic symptoms
N3: Incomplete spinal cord injury or any degree of cauda equina injury
N4: Complete spinal cord injury

Primary injury

T8-T9: C

Secondary injury

(T9: A3; N3; M2)

Neurologic status and modifiers

M0: Injury to the tension band based on spinal imaging with or without MRI. This modifier is used to designate those fractures with indeterminate injury to the tension band which might argue either for or against surgery for patients with relative surgical indications. Examples of M0 modifier include ankylosing spondylitis or burst fractures affecting the spinal canal.

M1: Complete burst fracture of T1, neurologically intact. PC either anterior or posterior.

M2: Complete burst fracture of L1, neurologically intact. PC either anterior or posterior.

Further information:
www.aospine.org/classification